REMARKS

Claims 1-5 have been amended. Claim 6 has been canceled without prejudice. Claims 10 and 11 have been added. Thus, Claims 1-5, and 7-11 are currently pending. By these amendments, no new matter has been introduced into the claims.

Rejection according to 35 USC §102:

On the merits, claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,073,773 (Van Steenbrugge et al.). Applicant amended independent claim 1 to distinguish the present application from Steenbrugge. To this end, amended claim 1 includes limitations neither disclosed nor suggested by Steenbrugge. The present invention relates to a production machine including a plurality of production units each performing a specific step in a production process. A network provides specific control information, for example provided by an external control system. The network comprises a plurality of switching devices as disclosed in Fig. 1 and 2 of the present application. Thus, a flexible routing of the control information is possible. New claim 10 adds the limitation that one of the production units is used as a redundant unit and can effectively replace a malfunctioning unit through the plurality of switching devices in the network system.

Rejection according to 35 USC §103:

Claims 6-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Steenbrugge in view of Sherer. Applicant canceled claim 6 and added a new independent claim 11. The new independent method claim 6 includes similar limitations as independent claim 1 and 10. Therefore applicant believes that this claim is also allowable.

4

HOU03:981282.1

The dependent claims include all the limitations of the respective independent

claims and thus are allowable at least to the extent of the independent claims.

CONCLUSION

The application as defined in the pending claims is patentable under 35 U.S.C.

§112 and §102 in view of the cited prior art. Therefore, applicants respectfully request

withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants do not believe that any other fees are due at this time; however, should

any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 to 1.21 be required for any reason relating to this document, the

Commissioner is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 02-0383, (formerly

Baker & Botts, L.L.P.,) Order Number 071308.0251.

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

Date: July 15, 2004

Andreas H. Grabert

(Limited recognition 37 C.F.R. §10.9)

One Shell Plaza

910 Louisiana Street

Houston, Texas 77002-4995

Telephone: Facsimile:

5

713.229.1964

713.229.7764 AGENT FOR APPLICANTS

HOU03:981282.1





JUL 1 9 2004

Technology Center 2600

BEFORE THE OFFICE OF ENROLLMENT AND DISCIPLINE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

LIMITED RECOGNITION UNDER 37 CFR § 10.9(b)

Mr. Andreas Horst Lothar Grubert is hereby given limited recognition under 37 CFR §10.9(b) as an employee of Baker Botts LLP, to prepare and prosecute patent applications for clients of Baker Botts LLP in which a member of Baker Botts LLP is the attorney of record. This limited recognition shall expire on the date appearing below, or when whichever of the following events first occurs prior to the date appearing below: (i) Mr. Andreas Horst Lothar Grubert ceases to lawfully reside in the United States, (ii) Mr. Andreas Horst Lothar Grubert's employment with Baker Botts LLP ceases or is terminated, or (iii) Mr. Andreas Horst Lothar Grubert ceases to remain or reside in the United States on an H-1B visa.

This document constitutes proof of such recognition. The original of this document is on file in the Office of Enrollment and Discipline of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Expires: June 30, 2005

Harry I. Moatz

Director of Enrollment and Discipline